

To: UCLA Vice Chancellor & Dean, Claudia Mitchell-Kernan

January 17th, 2010

Dear Vice Chancellor & Dean Claudia Mitchell-Kernan,

I am enclosing the letter I wrote to you ten years ago today concerning my termination from UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (I have changed only the date). I am also enclosing my submission to the UCLA Academic Senate which accompanied that letter. I'm sending you the letter and submission again because these documents contain facts and academic and ethical principles that will always remain crucial not only to the proper functioning of UCLA, but also to the educational foundations of the university itself. In fact, if UCLA ever attaches an expiration date to the facts and principles of my termination, it will then show the public that it has altogether ceased to be a reputable public university. Likewise, it is when UCLA continues to ignore the facts and principles of my termination that this university continues to betray its Statement of Ethical Values & Standards of Ethical Conduct as well as its Faculty Code of Conduct—and thereby continues to betray not only this university's own students, but also the public supporting this university.

As a student of UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, I was to make my own contribution to the field of education, and in making this contribution I was to rigorously apply academic principles to the discovery and pursuit of facts, and follow these facts wherever they may lead. And since it happens in our search for knowledge and understanding that we sometimes discover the most important facts in the most unlikely places, so it was that I discovered these facts in what was for me at the time a most unexpected place: my termination from UCLA.

Since I last wrote to you, in my reading about education and in my discussions with others on the facts of my termination, I have not found a principled argument for ending my pursuit of these facts and allowing my termination to stand. Indeed, as I understand education and the mission of the entire university, I would be doing great harm to my chosen field of education, to UCLA's student body and to the university itself if I were to disregard these facts, and along with them the university's foundational principles. And as a citizen, my responsibilities to this public university did not end when UCLA ended my academic studies.

As you have most likely known for the past ten years, after my termination my graduate advisor, Dr. Nicholas Blurton-Jones, wrote to me that he was willing to argue that my termination from UCLA

indicates that you have been made to pay with your academic career for department error (no copies of probation letters to me), professor and university disorganisation (incompletes not being processed), [and] carelessness by whoever (Harold [Levine] claimed it was the Grad Division office?) issues the dismissal notice (for their failure to verify the situation).

You also most likely know that this past summer UCLA demanded that I remove from the Internet my website offering the public important facts on how this public university operates when terminating a student. UCLA said that its demands were necessary "to protect its trademarks and reputation." However, the public may seriously question what sort of brand name and

reputation UCLA is protecting (or marketing) when its demands run afoul of U.S. Constitutional law protecting free speech.

If UCLA is to stand by its termination of a student, or to put this otherwise, if UCLA truly understands what is necessary “to protect its trademarks and reputation” (to say nothing of education itself), this university will openly demand that its own faculty members make my advisor’s argument, and UCLA will then openly refute this argument in order to uphold this student termination—in what is quite simply the everyday scholarly work at a university promoting itself under the banners of integrity and accountability.

Or if UCLA continues to ignore this necessary work involved in its termination of a student, this public university is thereby saying to the public what the facts and circumstances of my termination make readily apparent: a few UCLA administrators, at their sole discretion and fully unchecked by UCLA faculty, decide when facts and the university’s academic and ethical principles matter, and when they don’t. Furthermore, it seems to me that the longer the university waits to engage in this necessary work, the more clearly it appears that UCLA is functioning first and foremost to weed out students—for reasons that are entirely antithetical to higher education (thus exposing this university’s trademarks and reputation as mere marketing).

I trust, Dr. Mitchell-Kernan, that as the Vice Chancellor and Dean of UCLA Graduate Studies you are aware of the extremely problematic facts and circumstances of my termination from UCLA’s Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. I also trust that you are fully committed to academic freedom and the university’s academic and ethical principles. Finally, I trust that you don’t need me to put forth here the actions that I think UCLA faculty members must take in this case in order to defend academic freedom and secure fundamental principles at UCLA. Indeed, I think you well understand the actions that are necessary in this case, so it seems to me that it is merely a question of whether you will act on these principles, in the security of academic freedom.

Surely your truly privileged position within this public university still allows you to ask yourself—and others: “What better place than here, what better time than now?”

Sincerely,

Tom Wilde